

and despatched from the collieries in India under the Act as per details given below:

Company	Funds released (Rs. in Lakhs)
(a) ECL	44.80
(b) BCCL	481.97
(c) TISCO	18.97

(c) and (d) During the period 1994 to 1997, there had been 77 fatalities due to water inrush at Gaslitant and other mines of BCCL resulting in loss of revenue on account of total stoppage of production from affected mines.

(e) and (f) Measures for prevention of disasters on account of inundation comprise detailed safety audit for each mine; construction of dams/embankment clearing and widening of water courses; filling up low lying and subsided areas; augmentation of pumping capacity; ensuring uninterrupted power supply for pumping installations; monitoring of rainfall and weather conditions and effective emergency evacuation systems etc.

[Translation]

Privatisation of LIC

643. SHRI DADA BABURAO PARANJPE : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a massive agitation has been launched in Madhya Pradesh against privatisation of Life Insurance Corporation, and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government to the privatisation of L.I.C.?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Some representations have been received by the Government against privatisation in the insurance sector.

(b) Under the existing insurance laws, the life insurance business is an exclusive privilege of Life Insurance Corporation of India (L.I.C). The LIC cannot be privatised without amending the existing insurance laws.

Hindi Advisory Committee

644. SHRI JAGDAMBI PRASAD YADAV : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Hindi Advisory Committee has been reconstituted in his Ministry;

(b) if not, the reasons for delay;

(c) the time limit fixed for reconstitution of the Committee and holding of its meetings; and

(d) the other steps taken/being taken to encourage the use of Hindi Language in his Ministry on the occasion of Golden Jubilee Year of Independence?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (c) The Hindi Salahakar Samiti in this Ministry is at the final stage of re-constitution.

(d) In accordance with the Annual Programme, 1997-98, of the Department of Official Language, on the occasion of Golden Jubilee Year of Independence all the constructive programmes to encourage the official use of Hindi are being organised. Hindi fortnight was also organised in which several competitions were held for Hindi speaking & non-Hindi speaking employees. One typing/Stenography Centre is being run under the Department of Revenue in which a number of employees of the Offices located in North Block/South Block are receiving training in Hindi typing & Hindi Shorthand.

[English]

National Rural Bank

645. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any final decision has been taken by the Government to start National Rural Bank of India;

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the time by which the bank is likely to be started; and

(c) the number of Regional Rural Banks running at profit giving details?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b) After considering a number of alternative models for restructuring of Regional Rural Banks (RRBs), including setting up of a National Rural Bank, it was decided to revamp the RRBs by cleansing of their balance sheets on a "Stand alone" basis. Accordingly, 136 out of 196 RRBs have been taken up, during the period 1994-97, for comprehensive restructuring including cleansing up of their balance sheets and infusion of fresh capital. An amount of Rs. 573 crores has been provided by the Central Government for this purpose as budgetary support. The objective of this exercise has been to transform the presently weak and ailing RRBs into financially viable and effective instruments of decentralised rural banking.

(c) As per the available data (latest) with National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) 44 out of 196 RRBs made profits during the year 1995-96.